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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-02 /005 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA/GRK:GTCHURCHILL
APPROVED BY: NEA/GRK:GTCHURCHILL
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USCINCEUR
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CINCUSAREUR
USDOCOSOUTH

S E C R E T STATE 236123

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 236123 SENT ACTION ALL NATO CAPITALS
PRIORITY NICOSIA ANKARA TEHRAN SOFIA, DECEMBER 1ST
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 236123

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GR
SUBJECT: CURRENT SITUATION IN GREECE

1. FOLLOWING IS BRIEF CLASSIFIED ASSESSMENT OF THE RECENT COUP IN GREECE. THE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING OF NOVEMBER 26 IS ALSO BEING REPEATED TO ADDRESSEE POSTS FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE. ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS WOULD BE MADE IN WASHINGTON ONLY. THIS INFO PROVIDED FOR YOUR BACK-GROUND.

2. A BLOODLESS COUP IN EARLY HOURS OF NOVEMBER 25 OUSTED GEORGE PAPADOPOULOS AND INSTALLED GENERAL PHAIDON GIZIKIS AS PRESIDENT. WHILE THE POWER STRUCTURE OF THE NEW REGIME IS STILL UNCLEAR, IT APPEARS THAT LT. COL. DIMITRIOS IOANNIDIS, CHIEF OF MILITARY POLICE AND ONE OF THE
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RIGHTIST MEMBERS OF THE 1967 COUP GROUP, IS THE KEY FIGURE

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BEHIND NEW LEADERSHIP.

3. THE COUP OCCURRED IN A PERIOD OF TENSION FOLLOWING THE STUDENT RIOTS OF MID-NOVEMBER, WHICH WERE PUT DOWN WITH THE LOSS OF ABOUT TWELVE LIVES BY THE PAPADOPOULOS-MARKEZINIS REGIME. MOTIVES BEHIND THE COUP REMAIN UNCLEAR, BUT UNDOUBTEDLY INCLUDE DISTRUST AMONG THE MILITARY FOR THE "MARKEZINIS EXPERIMENT", THE PROGRAM INITIATED BY PAPADO-POULOS FOR RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT, WHICH MANY FELT WAS ALLOWING GREECE TO SLIP BACK TO THE POLITICAL

CHAOS THAT CHARACTERIZED THE PRE-1967 PERIOD. AS A MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN THE PAPADOPOULOS REGIME, IOANNIDIS REPORTEDLY OPPOSED LIBERALIZATION OR ANY MOVE TOWARD ELECTIONS.

4. THE NEW GOVERNMENT THAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED CONTAINS NO WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES. PRESIDENT GIZIKIS, UNTIL NOW COMMANDER OF THE FIRST ARMY, IS A QUIET UNASSUMING MAN WITH CONSERVATIVE, PRO-WESTERN LEANINGS. THE NEW PRIME MINISTER, ADAMANTIOS ANDROUTSOPOULOS, WAS FINANCE MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR IN THE PAPADOPOULOS GOVERNMENT. OTHER MINISTERS, RECRUITED IN A MATTER OF HOURS, INCLUDE PROFESSIONAL MEN, TWO RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS, A FEW FORMER POLITICIANS, AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME. THE UNDISTINGUISHED NATURE OF THE CABINET MAY FORESHADOW PROBLEMS THIS REGIME WILL ENCOUNTER IN ATTRACTING COMPETENT MEN TO ITS STANDARD OR THE PRESENT LINE-UP MAY PROVE TO BE INTERIM.

5. FOR THE MOMENT, THE NEW LEADERSHIP IS MAINTAINING FIRM CONTROL WITH A LIGHT TOUCH. ARRESTS HAVE BEEN FEW, AND POLITICAL LEADERS PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN THE LAST WEEKS OF THE PAPADOPOULOS REGIME HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE IS ONE OF EUPHORIA; HAVING RID ITSELF OF ONE UNPOPULAR LEADER, THE COUNTRY HAS NOT YET ASSESSED THE NATURE OF THE NEXT. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THE PRESENT REGIME CONTROLS THE ARMED FORCES, IT LACKS A BROAD POPULAR BASE. AS IT ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH PRESSING DOMESTIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS INFLATION, STUDENT UNREST, AND PUBLIC

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DEMANDS FOR LIBERALIZATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, IT WILL FACE NEED TO MAKE CHOICE BETWEEN MOVE TO CON-STITUTIONAL BASE OR, INCREASINGLY, AUTHORITARIAN RULE. OVER THE LONG RUN THE RESULT MAY WELL BE POLITICAL POLARIZATION, LEADING TO INSTABILITY AND SETTING THE STAGE FOR YET ANOTHER COUP, AGAIN MOST LIKELY FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY.

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6. IN HIS POLICY STATEMENT OF NOVEMBER 28, PRIME MINISTER ANDROUTSOPOULOS REVERTS TO THEME OF 1967 COUP LEADERS--THAT GREECE WILL BE TAKEN BACK TO TRUE DEMOCRACY BUT ONLY AFTER PUBLIC HABITS HAVE BEEN CLEANSED AND MORAL ORDER RESTORED. STATEMENT IMPLIES THAT PRESENT LEADERSHIP WILL CREATE A NEW CONSTITUTION. MUCH ATTENTION GIVEN TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES, WHICH ARE STATED IN BROAD, UNCONTROVERSIAL TERMS.

7. IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE CERTAIN OF THE DIRECTION THE NEW LEADERSHIP WILL TAKE, WHETHER REFERENCES TO THE LACK OF A POPULAR BASE FOR THE PAPADOPOULOS-MARKEZINIS REGIME

ARE INDICATIVE OF AN INTENTION TO MOVE TOWARD A CON-STITUTIONAL-REPRESENTATIVE BASE OR TO FORM A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY REMAINS TO BE SEEN. FOR TIME BEING GOVERNMENT SHOULD GET BY BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL EUPHORIA RESULTING FROM REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT PAPADOPOULOS.

8. FOR ROME: NEW REGIME SEEMS TO BE FAVORING RETENTION OF REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN RESTORATION OF MONARCHY. FYI IOANNIDIS REPORTEDLY REGARDS MONARCHY AS OUT OF DATE. END FYI. ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. COMPLICITY IN COUP WERE DENIED BY VEST (SEE DEPTEL 321673). PORTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE236123
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/GRK:GTCHURCHILL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731242/aaaabeuu.tel
Line Count: 141
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <08 MAR 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CURRENT SITUATION IN GREECE
TAGS: GR
To: USCINCEUR CINCUSNAVEUR CINCUSAFE CINCUSAREUR USDOCOSOUTH
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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